A

SERMON

PREACH'D before the

QUEEN

AT

WINDSOR,

September 14. 1707.

11*th Chapter of* HOSEA, 9*th Verse.*

——*I am God and not Man.*

By *J. ADAMS*, D.D. Rector of St. *Alban Wood-ſtreet*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majeſty.

Publiſh'd by Her Majeſty's Special Command.

LONDON:

Printed by *H. Hills*, in *Black-fryars*, near the Water-ſide, For the Benefit of the Poor, 1709.

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11th *Chapter* of HOSEA, 9th *Verse*.

——*I am God and not Man.*

THere is nothing that contributes more to each Man's Happineſs, and to the Publick Good, than the regulating his Paſſions, and reſtraining his Reſentments, the being of a meek, merciful, and forgiving Temper; therefore this is the great Deſign, and certain Effect of true Chriſtianity, and God leads us towards it, not only by many Precepts, but alſo by his own Example; particularly, by ſetting before us, in what manner he himſelf deals with ſinful Men, and in how very different a way they deal with one another.

But this is no-where done ſo lively, ſo emphatically, as in theſe few Words, *I am God and not Man.*

For God having ſent this Prophet to denounce his Judgments againſt the *Ten Tribes*, which had revolted from him, and which were often called *Ephraim*, from the Chief of them, and ſeeming juſt ready to put them in Execution; he relents of a ſudden, with all the tenderneſs of an indulgent Parent, and cries out, *ver.* 8. *How ſhall I give thee up* Ephraim? *How ſhall I deliver thee* Iſrael? *How ſhall I make thee as* Admah? *How ſhall I ſet thee as* Zeboim? *mine Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine Anger, I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim, *for I am God and not Man. God*, Gracious, Patient, Forgiving: *God*, who in the midſt of Judgment thinketh upon Mercy, *Not Man*, ſtill ready to *Execute the fierceneſs of his Anger* againſt his innocent or miſtaken Brother.

Wherefore, although these Words are full of Grace and Mercy, yet they contain a pathetick Reproof, and must give a passionate and revengeful Man a sudden and surprising Sight of himself; and if he had any Virtue left, wou'd shame him into Patience, Gentleness and Charity. That they may have this happy Effect, I beg leave to discourse of them farther in this method.

I. I shall give you a short View of the Divine and Human Nature, and shew the vast difference between God and Man, especially as to his dealing with Men, and Men with one another.

II. I shall shew, That the greatest Improvement of Human Nature, is to imitate God in those Attributes, in respect to which, he declares himself here to be *God and not Man.*

III. That as this is required in the Gospel, in the most strict and positive manner, so the greatest Assistance and most powerful Motives, are to be found there to this purpose.

For the first. The very Name of God must fill the rational Soul with all that is Perfect and Adorable; Wisdom, Justice, Holiness and Goodness, flow in at once, upon the Mind, at the first mention of it: But of all these, none is more visible to us, than his Goodness; none is there that he delights in more himself; It is *this* which he wou'd have the Foundation of our Worship and Obedience: It's *thro' this*, that he would have us behold his other Attributes; That we might not be startled at his universal Knowledge, not tremble at his Almighty Power, when we are assur'd that both are attended and directed by his infinite Goodness.

Yet to have a right Notion of God's Goodness, we are not only to consider him as our Creator and Preserver; or as the bounteous Giver of all good Things, but also as the reliever of our Afflictions, and the comforter of our Sorrows; neither should we consider him only as forbearing and long-suffering, as to this World,

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but as remitting all Puniſhment for the World to come. But this can be only through Chriſt Jeſus.

For otherwiſe, how could we by the help of Reaſon, or the Light of Nature, ever be aſſur'd, that Divine Juſtice cou'd be ſatisfied for Sin? For one Attribute to break in upon another, wou'd argue Imperfection in the Divine Nature; therefore, tho' God ſhou'd exceed ever ſo much in Goodneſs, this wou'd not make amends for any defect in his Holineſs or Juſtice: And ſince God has given Laws even in the ſtate of Nature, grounded upon the Notions of Good and Evil; ſince he has explain'd, and confirm'd thoſe Laws by Revelation, and annexed ſolemn and dreadful Threats upon the breach of them; ſince all Sin is the breach of ſome one of theſe Laws, and Puniſhment muſt be due to it, both according to God's Truth and Juſtice: How cou'd Divine Goodneſs have been at liberty to have exerted it ſelf, unleſs theſe had been ſatisfied? But, how cou'd they ever have been ſo, but by the perfect Obedience, and meritorious Sufferings of the Holy Jeſus? From *hence* therefore is it, from *hence alone*, that Divine Mercy ſhines out upon the World, in Forbearance and Long-ſuffering, in Pardon and Forgiveneſs; ſuch Forgiveneſs as extends not only to the remitting of Temporal, but of Eternal Puniſhment; nay, to the beſtowing of an Eternal Reward.

Wherefore, tho' Natural Religion has had its Raptures of Gratitude, and Hymns of Praiſe; yet this wonderful Manifeſtation of Divine Goodneſs, aſtoniſh'd the Angels themſelves, and was the Subject of that *New Song* in Heaven, when thouſands of thouſands of them fell down before the *Lamb that was dumb before the Shearers, and opened not his mouth*, crying out with a loud Voice of Joy and Thankſgiving, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Glory, and Bleſſing.* —— *Bleſſing, Honour, Glory and Power be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Rev. v. 12, 13.

This is but a ſhort view of Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, towards ſinful Man: But alas! on the other ſide, how does ſinful Man behave himſelf towards his Brother! how often does he ſwell with Pride, Envy and Malice! how implacable is his Anger! how raſh his Revenge! what Fury is in his Looks! what Curſes in his Mouth! and what Cruelty in his Actions! Peeviſh and Reſtleſs in his Retirements, *A Lyon in the Houſe, and Frantick among his Servants*, *Eccleſ.* iv. 30. Abroad, jealous of his Wit, his Knowledge or his Courage; and thro' Impatience to ſhew them all, Inſolent and Unſociable: Mingling his Reſentments even with his Devotions, asking Forgiveneſs, tho' reſolv'd to grant none; and bringing an hard and revengeful Heart, inſtead of a broken and a contrite One, into the preſence of a merciful and forgiving Redeemer: Or if he happen to be brought to any Temper at laſt, then, how provoking are the Formalities of Reconciliation! how abſurd are the Niceties and Scruples of pretended Honour! while he meaſures out juſt ſo much Forgiveneſs, for ſo much Worſhip and Submiſſion, from his Fellow Creatures.

This is ſo very true of ſo many thouſands, that the Prophet here makes it a general deſcription of Humane Nature: But is this the Creature that was made after God's Image? Can this be the Diſciple of the Meek, the Suffering and Forgiving Son of God? yet to increaſe our Wonder, this ſad difference between God and Man will appear more remarkable, if we compare them more particularly.

1. Firſt then let us conſider the Great Majeſty of the moſt High God: How Glorious! How Powerful! How Terrible it is, as the Prophet *Habbakkuk* excellently deſcribes it, *chap.* iii. *v.* 5, 6. *Before him went the Peſtilence, and burning Coals went forth at his Feet. He ſtood and meaſured the Earth: he beheld, and drove aſunder the Nations, and the everlaſting Mountains were ſcattered, the perpetual Hills did bow. The Sun and Moon ſtood ſtill in their Habit a-*

Habitation, as he marched through the Land in Indignation, and threshed the Heathen in his Anger. But alas! what is Man! Man whose Wisdom is Folly, and Power Weakness! *Who dwelleth in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the dust, who is crushed before the Moth* Job iv. v. 19. Yet this is that Creature so jealous in his Pride, so passionate in his Temper: This is the Wretch that Rages, Curses, and Blasphemes upon every Trifle; that offers all Injuries and forgives none; That is implacable to his Neighbour, and insolent to his God; while that great and powerful Being, is slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy; while the glorious Majesty of Heaven, though provok'd with a thousand, thousand sins; though he sees his Laws transgress'd, and his Mercies despis'd every Day, every Moment; yet still is Forbearing, and Long-suffering, still waiting to be Gracious to us.

2. God is Eternal, *He only hath Immortality*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Because he is without Beginning, as well as without End; and because 'tis he alone that can impart it to others: For such too is his Mercy, extending to Eternity. 'Twas not enough that God took Man out of the Dust, and endow'd him with a rational Soul, unless that Soul were made Immortal, that he might communicate his Goodness to it for ever, and make it happy to Eternity; And O! by what wonderful means did Divine Mercy work to bring this to pass, after that Man had justly forfeited all Pardon, all Forgiveness; Even by the Death of the Holy Jesus.

But if God is thus Eternal, both as to his Essence, and as to the extent of his Mercy: How short is Man's momentary Being, who is *made to possess a few Months of Vanity,* ——*Whose Life is even as a Vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*, James, chap. iv. v. 14. But for all this, how boundless is his Anger? What laboured Projects of distant Revenge does he form? He aims at Eternity in nothing so much as in his Malice, and gladly would pursue his Enemy to Ruin, to

Death, to Hell it self. In the mean while, Life wears away and Death draws on, and then this vain Persecutor of himself, as well as others, sinks down silently into the Grave, *and all his Thoughts* (of Revenge) *Perish*, and all his Passions are laid, but then he must rise again to Judgment: Wherefore, how excellent is that Advice, *Remember thy End, and let Enmity cease. Remember Corruption and Death, and abide in the Commandments. Remember the Commandments, and bear no Malice to thy Neighbour*, Ecclus. xxviii. 6, 7.

The same Comparison might be made, as to God's other Attributes; his Omniscience, his Wisdom, his Holiness, &c. But what has been said as to these, may suffice to shew the great and sad difference between God and Man, as to the subject of this Discourse: And also, how Comprehensive! how Useful! how Emphatical the Words of the Text are, *I am God and not Man*: For as Good and Evil, Wisdom and Folly, Truth and Falshood, are better distinguish'd, where they are placed near to one another: So Man's Anger and Revenge must shew more odious, when set in the Lustre and Brightness of God's Patience and Mercy, and Man ought to be ashamed of his manner of treating his Brother accordingly.

But virtuous Shame kindles new Resolutions of Obedience, and urges on the Soul in a kind of Impatience, to make amends for what is past: Wherefore, to guide and direct it in so doing, I shall shew,

II. That the greatest Improvement of Humane Nature, is to imitate God in *those Attributes*, in respect to which, he declares himself to *be God and not Man*.

Nothing debases Humane Nature more, than the being of a Passionate and Implacable Temper: Calmness and Easiness of Mind, are the effects of good Sense, as well as good Nature; they are the result of conscious Virtue, and flow from the just Security which a Man has, as to himself, whenever there shall be occasion for his Knowledge, Learning, Courage, &c. but

Passion

Passion is the contrary to all these, and is made use of to conceal the want of them, or will certainly render them all unprofitable: Therefore nothing can be more contemptible.

And tho' we are apt to despise those that are slow to Apprehend, and to laugh at Dulness and Stupidity; yet a Furious Passionate Temper is far worse: Dulness, indeed, hinders increase of Knowledge, but then it is seldom troublesome to it self or others; whereas violent Passion hurries Men into Error, in the search of Truth; and into Injustice in all Dealing with our Neighbour; and, as a Man cools, leaves Vexation and Remorse behind it; and in these and other respects is worse than Stupidity it self: For as to the Publick Good, how much better is it, that Reason should (in the same number of Persons) be always Useless, than always Dangerous? And as for a Man's self, how much more Innocent and Happy is he, who is almost Becalm'd, than he who is in a continual Tempest? *Seest thou a Man, that is hasty in his Words?* (saith *Solomon*, *Prov.* xxix. 20.) *there is more hope of a Fool than of him*; because it is much easier to inform Dulness, than to convince Pride. But if Folly should for all this, seem still worse than Passion, the same Author tells us, *Chap.* xiv. *ver.* 29. *That he that is hasty of Spirit exalteth Folly*, raises it to the highest Pitch, makes it most Conspicuous and Remarkable; if so, as this is the effect of Passion, nothing can debase or degrade Human Nature more: Whereas it is improv'd and exalted in the highest manner, by imitating God, particularly in those Attributes which are referr'd to in the Text.

That God ought to be imitated, is generally agreed, but then People are apt to mistake in the choice of those Attributes which are most proper and beneficial for their Imitation. We are not capable of being very like God, in his Omniscience, or his Almighty Power,

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but we are very capable of being like him in his Goodness. Yet our Vanity makes us aspire chiefly after the other, insomuch, that we would not only be as Wise as God, but *Correct* his Wisdom, tho' manifested by Revelation, in the Making, Governing, and what is most strange, in the *Redeeming* of the World. We grasp at what we can of his Power, and according to the measure we have of it, turn it against our Fellow-Creatures; but who is there that strives to imitate his Goodness? This alas! is few Mens Care, though it be every Bodies Duty and Advantage; therefore is it, that the little we can attain to of the other, becomes hurtful; therefore is it, that Power so often runs into Oppression, and Wisdom into Cunning; whereas, he that proposes to imitate God's Goodness chiefly, becomes himself a publick Good, and then the more Power and the more Wisdom *He* has, the better is it for Mankind. This made that excellent Emperor *Antoninus*, encourage himself so often to his Duty: *The best way of Revenge*, says he, *is not to do like him that injures you, let this one thing be thy constant Pleasure and Delight*, (speaking to himself) *to go on, from one act of doing Good, to another, having God's Example still before thee.* And in another place, *Endeavour to continue always such, as Philosophy would make thee, viz. To worship the Gods, and to do good to Mankind; Life is but short, the best Fruit we can have of it, is to preserve a good Conscience, and to do Good to the Publick.*

Lib. 6. §. 5.

Lib. 6. §. 23.

How safely did God entrust so much Power, with so much Goodness! How gracious is he, when he raises up such Princes to the World! But how Dull and Ingrateful are they, who, when they have *such* a Blessing, *such* an Example, will not imitate it accordingly!

But if they would do so, the best way to do Good, is to begin with Forgiveness and Mercy, because these will

will open the Door to all kinds of Beneficence, whereas Unforgiveneſs ſhuts it; And that too, not only againſt particular Enemies, but againſt every Body elſe; becauſe Peoples Tempers grow Soure, and their Hearts Hardened, through continual Thoughts and Contrivances of Revenge; but Goodneſs keeps the Soul Tender and Compaſſionate, and like the Widows Oil, increaſes while it is poured out, and imparted to others; this is a Treaſure never to be exhauſted, or taken from us; nay, it is not in a Man's Power, (becauſe it cannot be in his Will) to confine it; a Man may keep his Knowledge or his Money to himſelf, but he never can his Goodneſs; this is diffuſive as Light, which is the Beauty of Heaven; as ſwift and as reviving as that is; and thouſands of Creatures owe their Well-being, though not their Being, to it: Nor can any Misfortune, either Poverty, Sickneſs, or Diſgrace, deſtroy it: It flouriſhes in Death it ſelf, for even then a meek, charitable, and forgiving Chriſtian may do good to many, by his Example, and by his Prayers; nay, what is more, this ſecures People againſt the Pride of Greatneſs, the Vanity of Succeſs, and the Flattery of Proſperity: And in all Events and Circumſtances adorns every Part and Character of Life; makes a Man the beſt Husband, the beſt Father, the beſt Son, the beſt Friend, the beſt Subject in the World. Wherefore, for the compleating of this Argument, I come to ſhew in the next place,

III. That, as this is required in the Goſpel, in the moſt ſtrict and poſitive manner, ſo the greateſt Aſſiſtance and moſt powerful Motives are to be found there to this purpoſe.

Though our Heavenly Father declares himſelf in the Text to be *God and not Man*; yet as to the *moſt remarkable Manifeſtation of his Goodneſs*, it may be truly ſaid, That he never appeared to be God more, than when he was Man, becauſe the Union of the Divine

and

and Human Nature in Christ Jesus, both as to the great End of it, the Salvation of Mankind; and the means of accomplishing this, the most cruel Death of the Crucify'd Jesus, was such an Instance of Divine Love and Mercy, as infinitely exceeded all that the World had ever found, or could ever possibly have conceived before: Wherefore, as we Christians have a greater Knowledge and Experience of Divine Goodness, and are made capable of enjoying the Benefits of it, even to Eternity, so we are oblig'd to a more perfect Imitation of it, towards one another.

For this Reason it is, that this is the chief Subject of our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, when he first began his Prophetical Office. Out of the *nine Blessings* which he begins that Discourse withal, *four* are promised to the *Poor in Spirit*, the *Meek*, the *Merciful*, and the *Peace-Makers*, St. *Matth. chap.* V. *ver.* 3, 5, 7, 9. And when he comes to explain and improve the Moral Law, *Ye have heard* (says he, *ver.* 21.) *that it was said by them of old Time, thou shalt not Kill.* —— *But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment.* St. *Jerome* says, those Words [*without a Cause*] *were not added in very many ancient Copies, according to which we ought not to be angry upon any Cause whatsoever.* *

After many other passages to the same purpose, *Ye have heard that it hath been said*, ver. 43, 44. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, Bless them that Curse you, do Good to them that Hate you, and Despitefully Use you*, &c. Which having enforc'd in the three following Verses, he concludes thus: *Be ye Perfect, as your Heavenly Father is Perfect*; which St. *Luke* Interprets in this manner:

* *Qui iraſcitur Fratri ſuo ſine Cauſa, reus erit Judicio, licet in pleriſque Codicibus Antiquis, ſine Cauſa additum non ſit, ut ſcilicet ne cum cauſa quidem, debeamus Iraſci.* Lib. 1. adv. Pelagian. pag. 282. Ed. Frob.

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Be ye Merciful as your Heavenly Father is alſo Merciful, *Chap.* vi. *ver.* 36. as if the Perfection of the Divine Nature conſiſted chiefly in ſhewing Mercy, and we could approach to it in nothing ſo very near, as in doing the ſame. And when he taught his Diſciples that excellent Form of Prayer, he reflects upon, and enforces but that one part which relates to our Neighbour. *For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes*, Matth. vi. 14, 15. Alas! nothing puts a ſtop to Divine Goodneſs; nothing hinders the Graces of the Holy Spirit; nothing ſubjects us ſo immediately to Divine Juſtice, as an Uncharitable and Unforgiving Temper: Therefore is Mercy and Forgiveneſs recommended to us ſo preſſingly upon the moſt important Occaſions, as at the receiving of the Holy Sacrament, and at the Hour of Death. Therefore beſides the many other Precepts which our Saviour gave (too numerous to be repeated;) for Meekneſs, Humility, and Love of one another, he enforces them all by his own Glorious Example, *Learn of me, for I am Meek and Lowly.* And again, *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye Love one another, as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another*, John xiii. 34. A *new* Commandment, not as to the *Nature*, but as to the *Extent* of it, and the great *Example* which we are to follow.

St. *Chryſoſtom* preſſes this admirably in one of his Homilies upon the *Romans*, (λογ. κα.) where ſuppoſing a Man to be in ſome ſuſpenſe, how far, and toward what Perſons he ought to exerciſe his Charity; "Make no "difference at all (ſays he) in ſuch Caſes, but Forgive, "Relieve, even him that would have murthered thee. "For thou art the Diſciple of him that Pray'd for his "Murtherers. Thou art the Servant of that Jeſus that "healed him that came out to take him, that received "the Thief into Paradiſe which reviled him, for both

"did

" did so at first; that was grieved in Spirit, not for " what he was to suffer himself, but when he foresaw " what would befal the Traytor *Judas*. Blessed Lord, " what an Example of Patience and Humility didst " thou leave us! But alas, how slow are we to follow " it?

Furthermore, lest Precept and Example should be too weak for a Duty so hard to Flesh and Blood, we have the Promises of God's Holy Spirit, which will afford us far greater Assistance, than can be obtained from Natural Reason; and therefore if our Religion require more of us in this particular, it ought to be remembred that it supplies greater Helps to perform it. For this Blessed Spirit, as it moved upon the Waters, and brought Confusion into Order, and Deformity into Beauty at the Creation; so will it lay the angry Passions of a disorder'd Soul, and inspire into it Thoughts and Desires of Peace and Reconciliation.

But then this Spirit cannot be obtained, but by purifying the Soul by true Repentance; for while Guilt lies festering at the Heart, and ill Conscience rages within, People fly into passion upon every Occasion, and lose the assistance of their Natural Reason, as well as of God's Holy Spirit. But when a Man has once made his Peace with God, he will naturally be at Peace with all the World. The Quiet and Joy of a good Conscience will shine through all his Words and Actions, and *that* Gracious and Beneficent *Being* who is *God and not Man*, will strengthen him from Above, and communicate unto him something of *that* Spirit of Meekness, Forgiveness and Love, which was poured out without measure upon the Holy Jesus.

Lastly, Let us remember that our Salvation depends upon this Duty in particular, as appears from what was said above, concerning that passage in the Lord's Prayer, and is farther shew'd at large in the Parable of the Merciless Servant, St. *Matth.* xviii. *v.* 23. Who seizing

zing upon his Fellow Servant for a small Debt, after he had been forgiven so great a one himself. His Lord revokes his former act of Mercy, and *Delivers him to the Tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him*; which our Saviour applies in those Remarkable and Dreadful Words, *ver.* 35. *So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your Hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their Trespasses.* So shall he deliver you over to the Tormentors till you have paid all that is due to him that is for ever, such Payment being absolutely impossible.

This may seem something strange at first, and it is indeed the most difficult part of our Duty. But then let us remember that it is our Gracious Redeemer that requires this of us, that requires it as a Test of our Love and Gratitude to him: And that the greater the Difficulty is, the greater will be the Reward. We may see Men disguise their Passions every day, for their Interest, we may observe the greatest Enemies converse together to serve a turn, with all the decencies of well-bred Malice: But besides the baseness of dissimulation, it is almost as hard to disguise revengeful Passions long, as it is to conquer them; therefore, if Men can do the one for their Temporal Interest, surely they might do the other for their Eternal Salvation.

I have now gone through what I propos'd to speak to at the beginning of this Discourse, and given a short view of Divine and Humane Nature, especially as to God's dealing with Men, and Mens dealing with one another, and shew'd the great and sad difference between them in this particular. And that the highest Improvement of Humane Nature consists in the imitating God in those Attributes referr'd to in the Text. That as the Gospel requires this in the most strict and positive manner, so the greatest Assistance and most powerful Motives, are to be found there to this purpose.

And what has been said, may be of use towards each Man's

Man's private Quiet and Happiness; as it may contribute something towards the Peace and Prosperity of the Publick, because it is from indulging their Passions at home that People become Troublesome abroad, and run into Parties of all sorts; and then let whatever will happen, no matter, so they do but satisfie their Interest or their Revenge.

Therefore the Regulating of violent Passions is what a Man owes to his Country as well as to himself. And the best way to do so is to learn to be a good Christian. To be firm and steddy to our Holy Religion. Faithful to that meek and forgiving Jesus, who by his repeated Commands, and perfect Example, leads us to these Heavenly Virtues, and makes them the condition of our Salvation.

Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ Forgave you. (O let us remember that continually) *even so Christ Forgave you, so also do ye.* Colos. iii. 12, 13.

FINIS.